Victimization and Degradation of Women in the Select Non-fictional Works of Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy

A Synopsis

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Overview

Victimization is a process or an act of making someone, or a sect, a victim by subjecting them to cruel or unfair treatment. The word was originally used in 17th-century France and it meant the practice of sacrificing a victim through the process of violence. In today's definition, it relates to the process for an individual to endure the wrongs inflicted upon him, particularly in a passive manner. The term is generalised as an unfair treatment, that incorporates a broad range of actions, typically comprising of harm, violence, exploitation, or mistreatment. These conducts can manifest in several forms, involving physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and to an extent, economical harm. Eventually, such acts result in the degradation of an individual to the point of depriving them of their rights, dignity and autonomy. The perpetrators of such action can be an individual, a group, an organisation, or even the general state of society. Though victimization occurs in varieties of settings and impacts all individuals but in the existence of gender-biased division, women are frequently and more severely affected as they face discrimination, injustice, and violence. Here the women change from a person into a prey of misfortune who suffers ongoing infliction of harm along with the complex interplay of social factors such as patriarchy, misogyny, and cultural norms and all these contribute to women's heightened vulnerability to victimization.

Since the beginning of civilisation, women were deemed as the weaker sex and perceived as incompetent to receive the same rights and liberty. Even the issue of victimization of women in society has been recognised in recent times and so is women as autonomous individuals. Until the late 20th century, women did not attain the same rights as men and were not lawfully protected from domestic violence. The concept of victimization is acknowledged and regarded as an offence in the contemporary society in recent history. For a long period, the acts were unquestioned and women were

relegated to subordinate status. It may be more reasonable to say that violence against women is an act committed against a marginalized group within society rather than just an offence against an individual. Despite the discrimination, women have undergone a series of struggles for equality and justice against the oppressive regime of patriarchy, and the fight is yet not over. Literature serves as a powerful instrument for expressing women's experiences with abuse, humiliation and oppression. The works on victimization deal with tales of women's crises faced in silence and pain.

State of the Art

Literature across all ages and cultures has consistently mirrored the cruel truth of gender inequality, violence, and discrimination faced by women worldwide. From ancient myths like Cassandra and Briseis in the Iliad or Draupadi in the Mahabharata to the nineteenth-century Victorian novel "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*" by Thomas Hardy, literature has depicted victimization of women and highlighted the social injustices and power disparities that oppress women. The reality of female degradational is witnessed in all colours, cultures and continents. Thus, Indian subcontinents also have literary works describing the trauma faced by women. The horrible acts of victimization have no territorial boundaries, cross nationals, and become more painful due to historical, social, cultural, and economical constructs.

Literature in the colonised countries deals with the distinctive portrayal of the victimized women, within the web of socio-cultural complexity. Historical and Religious background incorporates ethnicity, class, caste, sex and even nationality, to highlight the perpetuation of a patriarchal system that subdues women. Mythological texts like the Ramayana and Mahabharata depicts the victimization and vulnerability of Sita and Draupadi. The contemporary authors like Arundhati Roy, Meena Kandasamy and Tehmina Durrani, discuss a wide range of disturbing issues affecting women. These

include forced marriage, domestic abuse, caste-based oppression and sexual violence. In their narrative works the authors have dealt with themes of domestic abuse and ostracization, and about the formation of female identities in an oppressive social and familial setting. The issue of domestic abuse is discussed in "*When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*" by Meena Kandasamy. The author in her semi-autography writes of being physically and sexually abused by her highly educated husband and the victim's parents do not come to the rescue, instead compel her to stay in the marriage in order to have a social standing. Another South Asian writer, Tehmina Durrani also delves into the theme of victimization of women in conjugal bonds. The book *My Feudal Lord* is her own autobiography of living with a violent husband and her life in a recurring state of abuse. The book aims to depict the theme of domestic violence in the sociocultural context of Pakistan. The victim is the third wife of a feudal lord, also a politician, who comes from a very respectable family in Pakistan. Durrani writes about gender-based violence and the treatment of women as the property of men with a sense of entitlement to oppress. The book examines the intersection of sex, class and power dynamics in Pakistan and challenges the traditional norms and conventional expectations. These female writers of different nationalities have displayed the theme of victimization of women in their own households, in all classes and communities.

The influence of both gender and caste propagates atrocious acts of victimization on marginalized women. Writers like Mahesweta Devi, Bama, Meena Kandasamy and Babytai Kamble have voiced the struggles of the subaltern women of tribal and lower-caste backgrounds. *Dopadi* by Mahesweta Devi is a short story where a tribal woman is brutally gang-raped by policemen. The depiction of the crime and the voice of the character after the assault shocks the readers to the core. Babytai Kamble in her autobiography *Prison We Broke,* originally written in Marathi, discusses the

patriarchy and caste discrimination within the Mahars community. Meena Kandasamy has also penned on sexual abuse of marginalized women in her book *The Orders Were to Rape You: Tigresses in the Tamil Eelam Struggle*. The book is about violence, particularly sexual violence, faced by the female rebellions of the 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam' in the Sri Lankan Civil War. The social, cultural and political setting interplays in the victimization and it acts as a severe act of claiming the body and portraying a powerful statement of the dehumanization of the women.

Literature is an important instrument in raising awareness about the victimization by depicting the suffering of women and provoking the readers to fight for gender equality and justice. Here, the three South Asian female authors in their non-fiction narrate the stories of the struggles and miseries of the victimized with the hope to empower other women.

Literature Review

L. Meloy and Susan L. Miller's book *The Victimization of Women: Law, Policies, and Politics* is a comprehensive investigation of how legal frameworks, policies, and political and social structures influence and aid female victims. The authors expertise in criminology and women's studies is seen in the academic work as it encompasses all forms of victimization, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, workplace discrimination and trafficking, along with laws and policies established for women's protection. The book goes into the psyche to give details on victim dilemmas and also the offender's viewpoint. The authors explore the political context influencing the laws and policies and indicate how the authority, power structures, including media, and ideologies shape the truth of violence against women. The book draws from sociology, criminology, law and women's studies that reveal the factors of race, class

and sexual orientation are integral for addressing the complex network surrounding victimization of women in contemporary society.

Savitri Goonesekere's book *Violence, Law and Women's Rights in South Asia (2007),* consists of three essays on violence against women in South Asian countries of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and their legal standing. The colonised countries have similarities as their criminal laws come from the British legal tradition. All three have ethnic and religious values which hinders in guaranteeing rights to equality and protection from violence. Goonesekere questions the efficiency of law in deterring violence and hopes these three South Asian countries must come to terms with international human rights standards and acknowledge people's right to choose them in the governance of family relations.

Roxana Palade's thesis *South Asian Women Writers Breaking the Tradition of Silence* tells the depiction of gender violence in writers from three South Asian countries: India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It examines the works of five female writers: Tehmina Durrani (My Feudal Lord), Anita Nair (Ladies Coupé), Manju Kapur (Home), Taslima Nasrin (My Bengali Girlhood) and Mukhtar Mai (In the Name of Honor). The thesis is in three chapters, first on gender-based violence, including children's sexual abuse, rape, and intimate partner violence, second on the mechanisms used for building and breaking silence; and finally, the significance of challenging this silence.

Manik Mandal's research paper *A correlative study of violence and trauma in Meena Kandasamy's semi-autobiographical novel "When I Hit You" or "A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife,* delves into universal experiences of violence and trauma and correlates to the events in the books. It talks about the signs of violence, trauma and abusive marriage that are camouflaged by ideas of love and marriage. The study has compared the gradual process employed to capture one in an abusive marriage to the

methods of colonization. Paper accounts for incidents of physical violence and the trauma experienced in terms of fear, panic, marginalisation, isolation and suicidal thoughts. Mandal explains writing as a dual function, on one hand as a medium of feminist expression of freedom and on the other, running from the truth to her subconscious world, where she yearns for love. The work also explores the social problems of shaming women for pre-marital affairs, depression existence in middle-class women and unsympathetic attitudes toward abused women due to societal norms.

Sharmila Rege's paper *Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position* is concerned with recognising and focusing on Dalit women's experience in feminist discourse. The paper questions and challenges the Brahamanic patriarchal stance in Indian feminism. Dalit women's literature holds insight into the amalgamation of class, caste and gender experiences and their standpoint brings a unique perspective to feminist theory. Rege also criticises the Dalit's view is seen as a 'difference' to the feminist theory and condemns the Indian feminists for neglecting the specific concerns of doubly marginalized women. The paper urges on techniques, styles and methodology for analysing the literature of the Dalit women and demands for restructuring feminist theory and activism by incorporating their story of oppression and fighting for these women's rights.

Suranjana Bhadra's *A 'Space' of One's Own: Exploring the Language of Resistance in Select Poems of Meena Kandasamy* is a research paper discussing on how contemporary Indian women poets, including Kandasamy, use poetry to challenge and subvert patriarchal power structures. In the paper, Kandasamy's work is praised for its militant language and also there is a bold reworking of mythical female figures such as Sita and Draupadi, portraying them as empowered and rebellious rather than subjugated. The article situates Kandasamy's poetry in a "third space" that merges the

real and the virtual and allows for new ways of self-representation and meaning. It draws on Julia Kristeva's concepts of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' to show how Kandasamy's literature disturbs the conventional patriarchal modes of expression. The article concludes that Kandasamy's poetry is a significant instrument of feminist resistance, by breaking free from the abusive cycle and conventional limitations and offering new ways of displaying women's experiences in Indian Literature.

Gopika P. Unni's *Dalit Feminism: A Voice for the Voiceless in Aruna Gogulamanda's "A Dalit Woman in the Land of Goddesses"* is a paper addressing the women's plight at the juncture of caste and gender oppression. It questions the historical and cultural belief system of presenting women on a pedestal, as deities, when reality pictures them as victims of manipulation, domestic violence, and rape, and constraining them within four walls. The author points out the hypocrisy in seeing the romanticisation of India as the land of goddesses because women in marginalized communities face severe discrimination and violence.

The research paper *Protest against Misogyny as Portrayed in Meena Kandasamy's When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife (2017)* by Rahmat Taufik Rangkuti and Tommy Christomy, critics the misogynistic views in the Indian modern era and highlights Indian women's protests and resistance against misogyny. The paper stresses the challenges faced by Indian women in expressing themselves, dressing freely, and combating patriarchal norms and at the same time protagonist's defiance against societal expectations and her struggle for autonomy. The research highlights the importance of fighting misogynistic views for women's rights and equality in India.

Muhammad Ehsan, Rabia Tabassum and Sayed K. Shah's research paper *A Study of and Violence against Women in Feudal Society with Special Reference to "My*

Feudal Lord'' by "Tehmina Durrani" explains how violence against women and girls, is one of the most heinous violations of human rights. The paper discusses issues related to sexual harassment, hegemonic masculinity and violence against women. It critically analyses the social hierarchy, a patriarchal instrument that shapes chauvinistic figures and who thence propagates and practices violence against women in Pakistan's society. The research paper conveys all kinds of violence - physical, sexual, and psychological, faced by women within the family and in society. The authors examine the confluence of feudalism and strong patriarchal structures. Finally, the paper also uses the feminist theories of Kristeva to discuss a woman's role within such a masculine paradigm.

Aarti Vishwakarma's *Depiction of Plight and Subjugation of Dalit Women in Baby Kamble's The Prisons We Broke* is a research paper explaining the oppression of Dalit women on the subtext of untouchability and patriarchy. It reveals the triple marginalization experienced by Dalit women in terms of gender, caste, and class. Vishwakarma points to the religious doctrine of the Varna system being the reason for the inferior status of women and it sanctions discriminatory practices and patriarchy which makes women a subsidiary and dependent on men.

Jaya Singh's *Tehmina Durrani's Autobiography My Feudal Lord: Unmasking Politicization of Religion and Relation* is a research paper highlighting the problems faced by women in Pakistan, misuse of religious doctrine for political and personal advantages, and its impact on patriarchy and feudal system. The papers also indicate suppressive laws like the Zina Hudood Ordinance and Law of Evidence, which are discriminatory to women. The paper draws attention to the narrative structure that systematically goes from indications of abuse to violence and inequality, and finally bravery of the author to fight and confront the abuser and society.

Research Gap

Despite the significant literary analysis undertaken on the individual studies of Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy there lies a substantial gap in research from the theme of victimization. There is a need for comparative studies of these writers on issues of women's oppression and misery from the perspective of South Asia. Literary analysis of the individual writers and their works is already done from the perspective of oppression, violence and trauma, along with its social and political analysis, but a gap remains in their collective contribution. This research aims to address that gap and study the victimization of women, through the intersection of gender, class and caste, in South Asian feminist literature.

Problems to be Investigated

Literature plays an important role in reflecting the position of women in society and correlates to the idea of identity formation. The social and political structure differs around the world and so do the experiences of women. Thus, it is important to analyse the written texts to highlight and challenge the patriarchal construct with their gender-based inequality and injustices. The research here will examine the three South Asian female writers and analyse the trauma and violence suffered by them in their own and other women's lives in a male hegemony. The research problems would investigate the methods and factors- social, political, historical, economic and religious, responsible for making one a victim. Also, the inhumane acts of degradation faced as a result of victimization, along with the resistance and strength undertaken to subvert those shackles. The research problem for investigation is - "In what ways do Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy's non-fictional works narrate the victimization and degradation, and showcase how the intersection of gender, class,

caste, culture and power authorities aligns to shape women's experience to subjugation and resilience.

Aims and Objectives of the Research

- ⇨ The followings are the aims and objectives of the research:
- ⇨ to examine the narratives of female writers and their experience with victimization in South Asian countries,
- ⇨ to analyse the psychological and emotional consequences of victimization and degradation, specifically in the works of three female writers – Babytai Kamble Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy,
- ⇨ to study the intersection of gender oppression with other forms of socio-cultural marginalisation factors in selected texts, such as caste in Kamble and class in Durrani,
- ⇨ to demonstrate the author or protagonist's resistance, resilience, and courage in opposing subjugation and violence,
- ⇨ to examine the portrayal of male characters and patriarchal structure, in the concerned literary work. It will show the respective social, cultural and political environments, i.e., the Indian structure through Kandasamy and Kamble's work and the Pakistan structure through Durrani's autobiography. It will help in eliciting women's experiences in both countries,
- ⇨ to observe literary devices and narrative strategies used in presenting the oppression of women,
- ⇨ to use feminist theories for addressing and criticising the victimization of women in the concerned text, i.e., a critical investigation to deconstruct the cause and challenge the norms, and

- ⇨ to explain that the literary works point to the reality of gender oppression and violence in South Asian Literature.

Hypothesis

The research investigates the three female writers – Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy in their selected works revealing the gradual process of victimization and degradation of women in South Asian societies. It will vividly portray the oppression faced by marginalized women and hold the patriarchal structures, in their various forms, to be solely responsible for making them victims. The research will show that the intersection of gender, class, caste and power authority is unique to the subjugation of women and identity formation in South Asian countries. It also will show that women's battles for justice differ in South Asia from the West, here women's struggles are not only against the abuser but also with the socio-cultural environment.

Methodology to be Used

The methodology for the research will use a qualitative and comparative approach, along with the use of feminist theories. The research will see a comprehensive analysis of the non-fictional works of Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy. Secondary sources of research will include essays, research papers, book reviews, journals, articles and even the published interviews of the authors. The research will also employ an interdisciplinary approach where academic and legal writing from various fields, like sociology and legal studies, will be taken into consideration for a better understanding of the text and subtext of South Asian literature. The comparative approach will help to examine the themes, style and issues in the work of the three authors, with a keen interest in how gender and race,

class and nationality come together to form women's identity. The research method is also accommodating for innovative ways to get beneficial knowledge.

Purpose and Significance of the Research

The research holds great importance in identifying the experiences of female victims and their painful suppression in South Asian countries, through the examination of selected literary texts of Babytai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy. The writings centre on the marginalized voices of trauma and violence in the lives of the subaltern women. The research plays a significant role in identifying the abuse that exists in society, like domestic violence, sexual violence and class and caste oppression. The non-fictional works focus on the merging of social, cultural, religious and political structures for women's identity formation. These factors are associated with the victimization of women in gender-based violence and trauma through class and caste. In Babytai Kamble's book *The Prison We Broke* shows the influence of caste and gender coming together to suppress and abuse her and the entire community of women. The feudal system and ill-treated use of politics and religious doctrine coming together to suppress women is seen in Tehmina Durrani's book *My Feudal Lords.* The theme of domestic violence is a concerning problem in South Asian countries. Contrary to the West, the violence here is much more brutal, and at the same time, familial and societal structures' acceptance of the crime and negligence of the pain is astounding. Both literary works *My Feudal Lord* by Tehmina Durrani and *When I Hit You: Or, Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* by Meena Kandasamy, show the occurrence of the same inhumane acts and bending of moral compass. The patriarchy is a power structure and so is present in the power authority, even in the form of military authority. Meena Kandasamy's *The Orders Were to Rape You: Tigresses in the Tamil Eelam Struggle* shows the use of rape as an army-employed technique for information. The research

draws indication to the ongoing gender-based violence and discrimination persistent in South Asia, which will provide significant help to policymakers and government to draw more efforts to this cause. Lastly, it substantially helps in identifying resistance and struggle to set free from victimization and is aimed at women's empowerment in the face of oppression.

Plan of the work

This tentative chapter division of the thesis would be as follows:

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Chapter 3 - Contribution of Baby Tai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy to South Asian Literature.

Chapter 4 - Unveiling Patriarchal Oppression: The Victimization of Women in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*

Chapter 5 - Victimization of Dalit Women in Babytai Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*

Chapter 6 - Gender Violence and Abuse in Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* and *The Orders Were To Rape You*

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Bibliography

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The chapter aims to give a concrete understanding of the victimization and subjugation of women through the lens of literary and non-literary works of South Asian countries. Female representation and their voice in South Asian Literature differs from the trajectory of the West. The patriarchal standing is built on historical and cultural factors and it is a contributing for women's oppression. The

integration of class, caste and beliefs show its influence on women of all social backgrounds. The critical analysis of such factors plays an important role in the portrayal of women in literature. The themes here looks for the depiction of women's oppression through the lens of domestic violence, sexual violence and abuse, forced marriages, honour killing, lack of education and economic opportunities, and societal constraints to conform to traditional gender roles. Notable literary works like Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* deal with domestic abuse, familial and social manipulation, and ostracization due to gender and caste-based norms. In Tehmina Durrani's work '*Blasphemy"*, women are seen as property and are subjected to violence and abuse in the name of religious and cultural traditions. Through the protagonist's story, Durrani critiques the lack of agency afforded to women and how they are denied basic human rights. Research work like the paper *South-Asian Young Women's Experiences of Violence and Abuse* by UF Imam, points to the issue of rape and violence in South Asian literature with historical and social insights. *Caste and Gender: The Violence Against Women in India* by Sharmila Rege, looks at the link between caste-based and gender-based violence in Dalit women's lives. 'The present chapter will introduce the idea of victimization and degradation of women in South Asian Literature and create a historical, cultural and social backdrop to understand the lived experiences and works of the three female writers in discussions.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This literature review attempts to give an in-depth and critical analysis of the corpus of research on the victimization of women, with an emphasis on the difficulties and miseries faced by women in South Asian countries. The study will look into the conceptual works on victimization from the disciplines of women's studies, sociology,

legal studies and literature. This interdisciplinary approach will help to form concrete ideas, definitions and understanding of the concerned topic. The research will also look into feminist theories on sexism, misogyny and violence, specifically in South Asian countries. Like the study of subaltern voice, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and theoretical works on Dalit Feminism. The literature review will also look into the archive of studies undertaken on individual writers in the form of research papers, essays, articles, book reviews and even published interviews of the authors. This will provide comprehensive knowledge of existing works and combine them to form a new approach to the study and answer the research gaps.

Chapter 3 - Contribution of Baby Tai Kamble, Tehmina Durrani and Meena Kandasamy to South Asian Literature.

Women of the subcontinent region have undergone social and personal turmoil in their lives due to the prominence of historical and societal constructs and it is reflected in the works of the writers. The three writers Meena Kandasamy, Tehmina Durrani and Baby Tai are far apart geographically and socially but are together by trauma. The current chapter focuses on the life of the three writers and how their works create significant marks in literature.

Meena Kandasamy, born in 1984 in Chennai, is a prominent Indian poet, novelist, translator and activist known famously for her fearless works focusing on the subject of patriarchal norms, social injustice, violence and caste exploitation. Her initial works were a collection of poetry, *Touch* (2006) and *Miss Militancy* (2010) dealing with the issue of oppression, sexuality, and feminist rebellion. Kandasamy's prose *The Gypsy Goddess (2014)* and *When I Hit You* (2017) has also acquired critical acclamation. It addresses the issue of atrocities faced by the lower strata of society, caste and gender violence, and domestic abuse. She has published many prominent research papers

supporting the same issues. Kandasamy is a fiery feminist writer and political activist, who advocates for the voice of marginalized groups.

Tehmina Durrani was born in February 1953 in Lahore, Pakistan. She is a prominent author, philanthropist, and women's rights activist and currently holds the office of First Spouse of Pakistan. She made her writing debut with her controversial autobiography *My Feudal Lord* (1991), which is about her own personal trauma in an abusive marriage. The book also talks about the patriarchal and feudal system which sparked debates and controversies on oppression and domestic violence. Other notable works of Durrani are *Blasphemy* (1998), the work exposes the exploitation of women by religious leaders, and *A Mirror to the Blind*(1996), a biography of social worker Abdul Sattar Edhi. Her works express the pain and challenges entrenched in the social structure of Pakistan and fight for the victims of such oppression.

Babytai Kamble (1929-2012) is a recognized Dalit writer and activist from Maharashtra, India. Her autobiography *Jina Amucha (The Prisons We Broke)* is considered one of the earliest and true accounts of Dalit women's lives in India. She was born in an oppressed caste, Mahar community, and faced discrimination and severe adversity throughout her life. The autobiography is an unfiltered view of the victims of caste and gender exploitation, violence, marginalisation, and social discrimination. Kamble as an activist was inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and was involved in social movements for the rights and equality of education for the Dalits. Her influential work is a Dalit women's discourse highlighting the strength and resilience of marginalized women in the face of extreme struggles and it ends with a hopeful tone for liberation through equal rights to education.

Chapter 4 - Unveiling Patriarchal Oppression: The Victimization of Women in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*

The chapter will be concerned with the patriarchal and feudal system in Pakistan, perpetuating oppression and victimization of women. The autobiographical book of Durrani concerns her turbulent marriage to Ghulam Mustafa Khar. The book shows vivid accounts of physical, emotional and psychological abuse along with societal norms silencing the victim and justifying the acts of abusers. The writer openly challenges the taboos of discussing the topic of domestic violence in conservative societies. The concept of male dominance in both the public and private sphere examines women's limited rights and opportunities in society and in the private life their roles and identities are subsumed to the role of wives and mothers. She also delves into how patriarchal structures and suppression are sustained by a system of cultural, religious, and political factors, showing the network working together to perpetuate subjugation and coming together for the process of victimization. The autobiographical book is divided into three parts -Lion of Punjab, Law of Jungle and Lioness. The first part shows the charisma of her husband, which initially blinded the author to the early signs of control and manipulation. The second part unravels their marriage, giving details of her husband's increasing violence, emotional abuse and infidelity. Here Durrani shares her suffering and highlights the cooperation between social injustices with the feudal and patriarchal powers involved in her life and the lives of other women in their victimization. The final part The Lioness marks the courage she took to free herself from the shackles of abuse and leave her husband to reclaim her life and form her own identity. She confronts her victimization head-on and decides to break her silence and tell her story of abuse and exploitation, as she says "*Silence condones injustice, breeds subservience and fosters a malignant hypocrisy"*. The author hopes

for other women to find the courage to break free from abuse and social and cultural constraints.

Chapter 5 - Victimization of Dalit Women in Babytai Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*

The injustice of gendered hierarchy between men and women creates an environment of suppression and when the intersectionality of socio-cultural factors like religion, caste and class occurs then it tells the experiences of doubly marginalized women. They not only suffer exclusion imposed by the upper caste but also see gender-based subjugation in their own community. Thus, Dalit women face victimization due to three reasons, first being women, second being lowest places in the caste hierarchy and finally being poor. The chapter will analyse the oppression of such women in the book *Jina Amucha* (translated as 'The Prison We Broke') and analyse it from the angle of Dalit Feminism. Kamble work is an autobiographical narrative of her life as a lower caste Mahar woman of Maharashtra. She conveys the tale of her and other marginalized women becoming a victim of social ostracization as untouchables, along with the socio-economic condition of living in a state of poverty, humiliation and abuse. Kamble writes about an instance where a Dalit woman was warned and scared to not leave a strand of hair in the courtyard while working as it could *pollute* the household of the upper caste. She also talks about degrading working conditions with menial jobs and meagre compensation. These women were constantly subjected to verbal abuse and denied access to public spheres for being untouchable. In private spheres, Dalit women are more frequent targets of severe cases of physical and sexual violence which are worsened by the influence of alcoholism and poverty. The instances of violence are so common that Kamble in her autobiography didn't feel the urge to write about it most of the time, as she says "*it was the fate of most women; I wasn't an exception. So why*

write about it, I felt". Kamble shows that the patriarchal structure in her own Mahar community justifies inhuman acts of violence and mutilation of women. She narrates the incident where a woman's legs are tied and her nose is mutilated off by her husband with the full support of her in-laws – "*they would make the woman cry in pain, misery and humiliation and this would drive her out of the house with blood pouring over her face"*. Such instance gets into a closer ordeal to stories of such victims and the inhuman degradation of their lives to shame, sorrow and indignity.

Chapter 6 - Gender Violence and Abuse in Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* and *The Orders Were To Rape You*

Meena Kandasamy is a fierce writer who voices against the patriarchal structures employed to subdue women. Her writing covers from personal to political domain of abuse and control. Many of Kandasamy's writings are drawn from real and factual gender-based violence encountered by women. The prose work *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* and her poetry collection *The Orders Were To Rape You: Tigresses in the Tamil Eelam Struggle* are drawn from the real stories of domestic violence and physical and sexual oppression. The current chapter focuses on Kandasamy voicing her struggles along with many other suppressed women voices who become victims of violence. The semi-autobiographical work *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* talks about the gradual victimization of women in the domestic sphere. It is the tale of violence suffered at the hands of a manipulative and abusive husband. The victimization is layered in abuse of her husband with unsupportive family and society, and the expectation for a woman to suffer in silence. Here the woman is degraded to living in isolation and constant fear. However, it is also a story of the female agency to resist and survive the abuse to reclaim her voice, power,

and identity and break silence, as she says *"I am the woman who is willing to display her scars and put them within exhibition frames"*.

Kandasamy's poetry collection *The Orders Were To Rape You: Tigresses in the Tamil Eelam Struggle* is on the factual experiences of female rebels of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during the Sri Lankan Civil War. The lives of these fighters are drawn from their interviews and reportage undertaken by the author and are later brilliantly captured in the poems. The collection focuses on the struggles of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, where women fighters, the tigresses, were victimised and traumatised by brutal sexual violence which was used as a weapon of war. The poem voices the state's use of rape as a weapon of war on these women fighters. It was not just a means of physical abuse but also of degrading and demoralizing their cause. Here the battleground becomes women's bodies and rape is the patriarchal tool of brutal control and reinforcing the dominance.

The present chapter will focus on Kandasamy's aforementioned works and how the process of victimization occurs using patriarchal violence in both private, domestic spaces, as well as political, in the framework of military conflict.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

The concluding chapter brings out the larger picture of the subjugation and oppression of women in the works of these three different writers. It portrays the harsh realities of victims of gender-based violence upon women coming from different backgrounds and the intersectionality of factors like social, historical, cultural, religious, and others, degrade the condition of women in South Asian Literature. The chapter will also show the comparative study of the themes and techniques employed by all the writers and present it from the modern feminist point of view. The works have delved into the physical, emotional, sexual and domestic trauma that is suffered by them

and is still faced by thousands of other women. Their stories show how women are deprived of humility, respect and freedom and to achieve basic rights and equality they need to struggle and fight from their abuser and the society. The instances of degradation in their lives are so pathetic that fear, wounds and isolation are the only truths of their past and present of many other silenced women. These written works also give hope for these marginalized and subjugated women to voice and fight against their victimization. The works also point towards the urgency of immediate action and change in society to break the cycle of victimization.

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